

Docket JP920000176US1

Appl. No.: 09/626,945

Filed: 07/27/2000

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 were originally presented in the application.

In a first Office action, dated August 26, 2003 (the "First Office Action"), claims 3 and 16-18 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1, 2, 4, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,507,643 ("Groner"). Claims 3, 6, 8-13 and 16-18 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Groner in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,444,768 ("Lemaire et al."). Claims 5 and 7 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Groner in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,584,181 ("Aktas et al.").

In response to the First Office Action, claim 15 was canceled and all the remaining claims were amended in a reply of November 26, 2003, so that the claims more clearly point out patentable distinctions with regard to the art cited and to correct indefiniteness.

Claims 1-14 and 16-18 were finally rejected in an Office action of February 3, 2004 (the "Final Office Action"), in which all the original rejections based on prior art were maintained. The rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, were overcome by the amendments submitted in reply to the First Office Action. Appellant appealed from the final rejection on July 5, 2004, amending none of the claims.

Prosecution was reopened in Examiner's Office action of February 16, 2005 with a new ground rejection. Claims 1, 2, 4, and 6 were rejected. Claims 8 - 14 and 16-18 were allowed. Claims 3, 5, and 7 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. Applicant herein responsively cancels claims 1 and 2 and amends claims 3, 5, and 7 to incorporate all the elements and limitations of claims 1 and 2. Applicant also herein amends claims 4 and 6 to depend on claims 3 and 5, respectively. A number of claims are also amended as indicated herein above to correct lack of antecedent basis.

PRIOR ART OF RECORD

Applicants have reviewed the prior art of record cited by but not relied upon by Examiner, and assert that the invention is patentably distinct.

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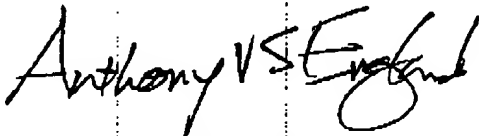
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REQUESTED ACTION

Applicants contend that the invention as claimed in accordance with amendments submitted herein is patentably distinct, and hereby request that Examiner grant allowance and prompt passage of the application to issuance.

Respectfully submitted,



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